

## Cinematic Design Problem (CDP)

**Learning Outcome:** The student will demonstrate the creation of a cinematic design problem based on the dialogic analysis of two master artists.

**Assignment: 200/1000 points or 20% of the student's final grade.** You will create a cinematic design problem (CDP) for the final film in this course: part one will be due with your director's book before you begin *any directorial* work; part two will be due when you turn in your film for grading. You will learn how to create the CDP through a series of low stakes/scaffolding writing assignments in the first half of the course and mirror those lessons applying them to your intended script and director's book (I suggest that you do this weekly along with the low-stakes assignments). The CDP reflects the decisions about the limits you are choosing for the design problem of your final film. These limits must be informed and part of a dialog with at least two Master Artists and their works: one master artist must be a filmmaker and one master artist must be from a different artistic discipline (i.e. visual art, music, writing). You are expected to rewrite your CDP throughout the process, adjusting the research and the document each week as you learn more.

With this assignment, you are wearing the "director" hat. For grading purposes, the instructor is a secondary audience. The CDP should be written as if it is being submitted to Cahiers du Cinema (now Phaidon).

### Schedule for Completion:

Completing the CDP will be an ongoing process as you prepare your film throughout the semester. The final document will be a minimum of ten pages. The CDP is due in class no later than **April 30, 2013** as outlined in the syllabus.

### Low Stakes/Scaffolding Writing Assignments

These assignments are not part of the larger project, but rather scaffolding assignments that fall into the Homework/In Class Assignment category on the grading scheme. The total point value is: 50/1000 points or 5% of the student's final grade.

1. **WEEK 3:** Using a clip from *David Fincher's "Fight Club"* and paying specific attention to his use of nose room, write one paragraph that uses the language of observation to identify the cinematic, visual, and narrative elements that you can see. Then answer: how do these elements affect the audience? Once finished, please discuss w/your team and choose the best summary to show the class. **(In class – 5 points)**
2. **WEEK 4:** Using the clip from *Steven Soderbergh's "Sex, Lies, and Videotape"*, and paying specific attention to his use of the axis, write two-paragraphs that interpret the cinematic, visual, and narrative principles he used to motivate the line crosses. Then answer: how do these elements affect the audience?

- What information does it give them? Once finished, please discuss w/your team and choose the best summary to show the class. **(In class – 5 points)**
3. **WEEK 5:** Prepare for your workshop scene by applying the elements and principles from Fincher's nose room and Soderbergh's axis to your cinematic plan. In one paragraph, carefully articulate what your intentions are by making these choices for the audience. Reflect these decisions in a shot list and storyboard. **(Assigned in class, give until next class to complete – 10 points)**
  4. **WEEK 6:** Using your workshop scene, write a short paragraph analyzing your use of nose room and axis. Judge whether the outcome of your decisions worked as you intended. If they did, identify any further elements or principles that might have occurred to you while reviewing the edit. If the outcome was not as you intended, what did not work and why? Specifically, what element and principle is actually at work. What could you have done differently to achieve the principle you were aiming towards? **(Assigned in class, give until next class to complete – 10 points)**
  5. **WEEK 7:** Using your workshop scene, analyze and evaluate in two paragraphs how Fincher's and Soderbergh's work compares with yours. Be specific about the elements and principles being engaged. **(Assigned in class, give until next class to complete. – 10 points)**
  6. **WEEK 8:** Using the summaries from week 7, divide into teams of three and discuss how another artist's work can influence your own work. As a team, write a two sentence summary and present to class. **(In class – 10 points)**
  7. **WEEK 9:** Using your workshop scene, choose a particular principle and element that you are interested in using with your own future designs. Find an artist that has worked with this principle in a way with which you disagree. What do you propose as a better element or principle to use? Has anyone else made this assertion? Can you find one that is unique and add to the discipline of film? **(Assigned in class, give one full week to complete. Research at home. Take notes. Will be given class time to discuss what they came up with. 10 points)**